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# Entertainment

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## Comic likes to catch them off-guard

BY JIM KNIPPENBERG | JKNIPPENBERG@ENQUIRER.COM

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Most of comedian Rajiv Satyal's work is in Los Angeles and that suits him just fine for now: "I love working the Midwest and I do it whenever I can for exposure, but you don't make any money. The clubs give you a room and food, but not airfare, so getting there eats up your paycheck.

"In Los Angeles, I just ride through hellish traffic and I'm at a club where you pretty much play for the industry - models, actors, other comedians, film people, TV execs, casting agents.

"My approach is to catch them off-guard. I'm a brown guy in a white world out there, so they naturally expect me to be more 'Indian.' And I do start out that way, with an accent and all, but the act morphs into what I really am - a skinny, bespectacled, nerdy guy from Ohio who worked in marketing for P&G and doesn't have luck with women."



Satyal admits he misses Procter & Gamble - the people mostly - but he's putting his training there to good use. "I'm the only comedian I ever heard of who doesn't keep notebooks full of material. I keep my jokes on a spread sheet because, hey, I'm from P&G so after I overanalyze, I overorganize."

The material he keeps on his spread sheets is clean stuff - PG-13 at worst - with jokes

about politics, soap, the Midwest and a healthy dose of ethnicity. "Being an Indian gives me license to say a lot about race.

"And certainly, being an Indian who grew up in the Midwest has influenced my act but not my whole life. I got thoughtful once and launched a whole exploration of my life and background and made a list of things that affected me as I live my life today. Being an

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Rajiv Satyal's material is pretty clean stuff - PG-13 at worst - with jokes about politics, soap, the Midwest and a healthy dose of ethnicity.

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Indian came in No. 11."

The dual blessing of a quick wit and the nerve to voice roguish thoughts came out much closer to the top. "My act depends on quick wit because I do so much improv now. You know, 'Hello sir, where you from? What do you do?' then a zinger."

Satyal's other blessing, he's quick to point out, is luck. "It's true, I carefully planned this move and saved every cent I could to get ready, but the bottom line is I've been lucky in the people I've met and the jobs I've gotten."

"This is the land of opportunity and I'm making the most of mine right now. The beauty of this country is we all have choices and I've made mine. No regrets."

## A RAJIV SAMPLER

- When you don't work full-time, all your friends just assume you'll pick 'em up at the airport.
- Another reason I left (Cincinnati) is that I was single. It's just what you do when you're single and 30 - you go to the coasts, where 30 is the new 25.
- I love Obama, but could you be any more screwed running for president in 2008 than with the name Barack Hussein Obama? You've got Barack, which rhymes with Iraq, Hussein like Saddam Hussein and Obama, which rhymes with Osama. This would be like a guy running in the '30s with a name like Germany Bitler Bussolini.
- Indians had nothing to do with 9/11. Now 7-Eleven is a different story.
- I have GPS in my car so I never get lost. But we need GPS in things we lose all the time without even knowing we lost them... like gloves, hats, scarves, virginity ...

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